

(Washington, DC) Last night, the House of Representatives passed the *Veterans Benefits and Economic Welfare Improvement Act of 2010* (H.R. 6132). Included in this legislation is the *Veterans Pensions Protection Act of 2010* (H.R. 4541), which was introduced by Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) and protects veterans from losing their pensions because they received payments to cover expenses incurred after an accident, theft, loss, or casualty loss.
(Please find attached a copy of the bill).

Hastings made the following statement on September 28, 2010 regarding this legislation:

“Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6132, the *Veterans Benefits and Economic Welfare Improvement Act of 2010*

This important legislation extends much-needed improvements to benefits and services for our nation’s veterans, who deserve the best we can offer. This legislation makes a number of critical corrections and updates to streamline services, expedite benefits, and ensure that veterans can take advantage of educational and vocational training opportunities to develop skills relevant to today’s job market.

“I am extremely pleased that the underlying legislation includes my bill, H.R. 4541, the *Veterans Pensions Protection Act of 2010*

. This legislation protects veterans from losing their pension benefits because they received payments to cover expenses incurred after an accident, theft, loss or casualty loss.

“Under current law, if a veteran is seriously injured in an accident or is the victim of a theft and receives insurance compensation, he or she may lose their pension if the money exceeds the income limit set by the VA. This means that the law effectively punishes veterans when they suffer from such an accident or theft.

“Such a tragedy happened to one of my constituents, a Navy veteran with muscular dystrophy who was hit by a truck when crossing the street in his wheelchair. His pension was abruptly cut off after he received an insurance settlement payment to cover medical expenses for himself and his service dog, and material expenses to replace his wheelchair. As a result, he could not cover his daily expenses and mortgage payments and almost lost his home. This is

unacceptable.

“The *Veterans Pensions Protection Act* exempts the reimbursement of expenses related to accidents, theft, loss or casualty loss from being included into the determination of a veteran’s income.

“I want to thank Chairman Bob Filner as well as Subcommittee Chairman John Hall and Ranking Member Doug Lamborn for their support on this issue.

“Madam Speaker, at a time when our nation’s servicemen and women are fighting two wars abroad and engaged in action in other parts of the world, we have a duty to our past, present, and future veterans to provide the very best in health care, job training, housing assistance, educational opportunities, and other services and benefits. We owe our veterans an enormous debt, and cannot thank them enough for their service. I urge my colleagues to give their unanimous support to this legislation.”

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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 [Veterans Benefits and Economic Welfare Improvement Act.pdf](#)